Mrs Hooper,
with the respects of
Chandler Robbins.

The Central Power of the Gospel:

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A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

INSTALLATION OF REV. GRINDALL REYNOLDS,

AS PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN CONCORD, MASS.,

JULY 8, 1858.

BY CHANDLER ROBBINS, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE SECOND CHURCH, BOSTON.

WITH THE

Charge, Right Hand of Fellowship, and Address to the Society.

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SERMON.

2 Cor. iv. 5, 6: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

These words have a peculiar pertinency to the occasion which has called us together, for the reason that they penetrate to the very substance of Christian preaching, and lay it bare, so that it can be distinctly seen; so that it cannot be misapprehended.

Separating all that is not absolutely essential, sweeping aside all that is irrelevant, rejecting all that is contrary, the apostle fastens attention to the central power, the vital principle, of the gospel. Carefully distinguishing between the light of reason and that of revelation, — which he calls the "shining of God" in the believer's heart "in the face of Jesus Christ," — between speculation and faith, between the individual opinions or the collective judgments of men and the authoritative word of God; as carefully dis-

criminating also between the personal gifts of the preacher, and the saving power which lies in the name of him who is "the truth and the life," — he sets before preachers and hearers the standard and the touchstone of Christian preaching: the standard for the preacher's sake, that he may shape and verify his purpose and method; the test for the hearer's, that he may discern the true from the fictitious, and not be beguiled by the fancy, the philosophy, or the eloquence, of man.

It would be unsafe to enter upon the discussion before us, without first clearing the way and securing the ground by an earnest protest against the totally unwarrantable liberty sometimes taken with the apostolic language, in substituting the word "Christianity" for "Christ Jesus the Lord;" Christianity, a system of religion, for Jesus Christ, the personal Saviour; Christianity, a vague word, an unsettled, disputed word, a term under which different men may comprehend very different things, — some men more, and some less; some only what is natural, and some the supernatural; some the disclosures of human reason, and some the revelation of God; some seven sacraments, some two, and some none, — may comprehend, in fine, whatever they may choose to consider important in dogma or in ritual; — Christianity, an indefinite word, a most accommodating word; under which notions and conceits not only unsupported by the authority

of Christ, but absolutely subversive of his authority, may hide themselves, and do hide themselves, spreading treason under the very folds of the banner which shelters them; — Christianity for Jesus Christ himself, as Paul conceived of him, knew him, loved him, preached him, and suffered all things gladly for his sake.

Paul never would have consented to the substitution, but would have rejected it with warmth. It would be difficult to discover in his writings an instance in which Christianity is spoken of as a system in the abstract, independent of the person of its author. He preached the "gospel of Christ;" he preached "Jesus, and him crucified;" he preached "in the name of Christ;" he called upon men to believe in Christ, to love him, to confess and serve him: he never preached a system merely. The glow of a personal gratitude and love warms every invitation and admonition he utters to the church. Loyal tears of mingled grief and indignation run down his cheeks, when he rebukes the faithless friends or the open enemies of his Prince. His every pulse throbs, his every word rings, with the consciousness of the sympathy of a glorious Witness and mighty Friend, when he declares, — "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;" when he stands forth amidst the temples and statues of Athens to proclaim Jesus and the resurrection; or when he

describes himself arraigned before the tribunal of Nero at Rome: "No man stood with me; all forsook me: nevertheless, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles" — the crowded assembly in the court-room of the Forum — "might hear."

Jesus Christ is not a name equivalent to the title of a system of religion; not a convenient label for a body of divinity and ethics; not synonymous with your ideal of human perfection, — your "model man." It is a name dear to God; "a name that is above every name;" the name of him who was "crucified for our sins, and rose again for our justification;" the name of our Advocate and Intercessor at the right hand of the throne of God; the name through which "whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins;" the name through faith in which, when Peter and John invoked it, the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple leaped and walked; a name at which "every knee shall bow, and which every tongue shall confess;" a name honored and sung and blessed in earth and heaven; the name through which myriad prayers, daily and nightly, go up acceptable to God, and answers of peace and hope and forgiveness, no less in number, come down into confiding hearts through faith in its prevalence with the Father, and its perpetual sweetness to his holy ear.

Here, then, we take our stand. This is our posi-

tion. Is it not strong enough? Is it not a safe starting-point? The true preaching is the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not the preaching of a system of doctrines, except with the recognition of the truth, — the glorious, animating, liberalizing truth, — that Christ himself is above and beyond any system; that he cannot be contained in any, even if, as a system, it were both true and complete. But what system, that even the collective wisdom of all the Christian ages might construct, could be complete? When you can build a reservoir to drain off the ocean, or an urn to exhaust the sun, you may condense the gospel into your catechism, or hold Christ in your creed.

Give me the Lord Jesus Christ himself to contemplate, to believe, to love; and you give me positive, essential, permanent Christianity. Doctrines vary, opinions clash, theologians dispute, denominations are at variance. My mind is confused, my thoughts are distracted, my heart is disturbed. Which way shall I turn? In which direction is the truth? What is truth? Is there any such thing as truth? The young Christian stands amidst these ceaseless discussions and controversies. He is attacked on this side by the votaries of one creed, and on the other by the partisans of a different. One beloved companion attracts him to that church; another, equally dear, would draw him towards this. One earnest and able

book urges a certain system of doctrines as fundamental, which another, no less learned and fervent, labors to demolish. Weak in faith, yet earnest in his desire to believe; longing, nay, deeming it necessary, to become a Christian, yet not daring to move towards the church, lest he should go wrong; not learned enough to understand, far less to solve, the questions in dispute, — what shall he do? Where shall he find rest? Is there any place of rest? Is there any path out of this perplexity? Tell me what is Christianity. Tell me where I can find it, — the real thing, sure and sufficient; and how I shall know it, have assurance of it, have experimental proof of its certainty, when I have embraced it.

Perhaps you may think that nothing more is necessary than simply to direct him to study the Bible. He takes his Bible, and goes to his closet, to search for some way to reconcile and harmonize these conflicting opinions; or to find out which of them is true, and which erroneous. Alas, alas! even here his perplexity is not relieved. One text seems to favor one side, and another the opposite. He finds that the Bible is very wide, deep, and miscellaneous. It has its secrets and its difficulties, — many things hard to be understood, and hard to classify, — like the great volume of nature. Where is the key by which he can discover the harmony amidst this variety, and reconcile its apparent discordances? How

can he understand it, except he have a competent guide? And where shall he find this competent guide?

Is there, then, no perfect satisfaction for his mind and heart, — for every mind and heart that earnestly crave it; no rest sacred, sure, and easily and quickly attainable; no competent guide to truth, to peace, to heaven; no polar star for each individual to steer securely by, to-day, to-morrow, and for ever; no one sure and only Light and Way and Truth and Life for each and every soul at each and every instant?

The Roman Catholic says plainly, that the mind will be lost in the intricacy of the Scriptures that goes to them unaided by tradition, and interprets them without the authority of the Church. He presents an infallible guide, — it is the Church: he offers rest, — it is in the Church. Only believe in the Church, trust yourself to it, yield up yourself to it, and your mind will be relieved of its perplexity; your soul will enter into rest. Yes, truly, if we *could* yield ourselves wholly up to it. But can we — are we prepared to do so? Must we not first inquire into its authority, ascertain the validity of its claims to infallibility, satisfy ourselves of its sufficiency? Those who have been brought up under its influence may repose in it without question; but, with those who have been educated without its pale, the case is different. They must first be instructed and convinced as to its claims and power. They cannot trust its pro-

mise, without being satisfied that it has authority to promise. This involves research, discussion, argumentation. It plunges the mind into a turbid sea of ecclesiastical controversy. No doubt the soul would find rest in the Church, after it had fairly got to the Church; but to get to it — that is the difficulty. It would be as hard, to say the least, for us Protestants to get at rest through the Church, as the Catholic insists it is to find it in the Scriptures by "private judgment interpreted."

What, then, is essential Christianity? How may I find it, — how may I know it, — how may I embrace it, — to-day? How may I show to others, to the young, to every one who desires to become possessed of it, where it is, and what it is?

The text, and others of a kindred nature, answer for me these questions, show my mind the true path out of these perplexities, and open to my heart the way to the believer's peace.

The Lord Jesus Christ himself is essential, permanent Christianity. He is the Truth; he is the Light and the Life; and he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Opinions change; but he never changes. Christendom is broken into parties; but Christ himself is not divided. Systems of doctrine clash at each period, and vary with the ages; but the perfections of the Lord Jesus are never out of harmony, and his personality remains entire. Scho-

lars and critics may work upon the letter of the New Testament, texts may be disputed, interpretations may differ, obscurities may still remain: but the image of Christ, as traced by the sacred penmen; as expressed by his own divine sayings and acts; as described by the significant names applied to him, and the offices he is said to perform for mankind; as preached, and held up to the reverence and love of the world, by Paul and John, — the image of Christ remains the same. Apparent differences in the representation of his nature and character indicate, not that the evangelists did not have in their view one and the same Jesus, or that they conflict in their descriptions; so that, if one is correct, the others are incorrect. They show rather the largeness, the sublimity, of his nature, blending the human and the divine. He is the Son of God, and he is also the Son of Man. He is meek and lowly in mien and spirit, yet he is invested with a drapery of supernatural glory. He is amiable, humane, condescending, yet WONDERFUL; the patient Sufferer, and the mighty Conqueror. Now he gently lifts up a little child in his arms, and blesses him; and anon calls the dead man from his grave, proclaiming, with unearthly majesty, "I am the resurrection and the life."

This person, the true and veritable Saviour himself, I can find in the Gospels. I can find him easily, I can find him at once; — if I do not ask to pry

into the mysteries of his nature; if I am content to see him as he clearly and impressively reveals himself; if I am content to let his dear and glorious "face" shine into "my heart." For he is described clearly enough in all his essential *moral* characteristics and *official* distinctions. I can find him and know him by the endearing terms applied to him by John, who leaned upon his bosom. I can find him and know him by the glowing words of Paul's manly and devoted affection. I can find him, where he often was on earth, in the centre of a group of the sick and the miserable. I can know him by the Beatitudes. I can know him by his prayers. I can know him by his virtues, perfect each, and perfect in combination. I can know him by his conversation with the woman at the well of Samaria. I can know him by his treatment of the Magdalene. I can know him by the stilling of the tempest and the quieting of the sea. I can know him by the midnight scene in Gethsemane. I can know him by the prints of the nails in his hands, and the wound in the side. I can know him by the bursting of the bars of the tomb. I can know him by his ascension into heaven in a bodily shape, breathing benedictions and precious promises, glorifying humanity by raising it in his own person even to "the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The Lord Jesus Christ himself I can know, I can

believe, I can love. I can receive the idea of him into my mind, his image into my heart; yes, the very same person the apostles believed and loved, and the church of all ages has believed and loved. I can receive Christ to-day, from the very lips of John and Paul, just as if I were sitting now at their feet, and listening to their own preaching. I can receive him, so that, if they were to question me, "Believest thou on him whom we have declared unto you?" I also could respond as did the Ethiopian to Philip, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

And, so believing and loving him, I also can find the apostles' rest; I also am a partaker of their joy; I also may be at once baptized, and go "on my way rejoicing;" I also have "Christ within me," my soul's strength, and my "hope of glory."

Give me the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and you give me the only possible embodiment, the only perfect illustration and interpretation, of his religion. Give me him whose name Paul wrote in the text, well knowing what he wrote, and why he wrote it, and I have the very life and fulness of Christianity. Let the "face of Jesus Christ" shine on my heart, *in* my heart, as it shone in the heart of the apostle himself, and of those favored ones who believed, who could not but believe, in him of whom that apostle spake with such impassioned love, whose personal claims

to gratitude and trust he urged with such importunate earnestness, — only let that face so shine in my heart, and *my* whole nature also will be irradiated with the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God."

But should the preacher, then, have no system of doctrine? I have anticipated this objection. He will have his system. It is an intellectual necessity; it is an intellectual advantage. It will clear up his thoughts. It will exercise and strengthen his faculty of reasoning. It will arrange and settle his opinions. It will give order, force, and character to his discourses. It will determine his ecclesiastical position and relations. He *will* have it, he must, he ought; and, having a system, he will, more or less, preach a system.

But the true preacher will remember, that system is for the understanding, — natural, needful, useful, — but that his calling is to deal not only with the understanding, but with the heart of men; to touch the deepest springs of human action; to bring to bear upon human nature a mighty power to arrest its wandering affections, and turn them back in a full, warm tide towards God. If there be any such power, how can he neglect to make use of it? How can he be excused for wasting the precious sabbaths in the enforcement and re-enforcement of his dogmatics upon the understanding of his people, when he

might apply a divine magnet to their hearts to draw them quickly to the Father?

And surely there is for the pulpit such a power; surely there is in the gospel such an attraction. If he be a true preacher of Jesus Christ, his own heart has been already touched with this loadstone, and is still often sensible of its attraction, and ever more and more. "If thou lovest me," said the Saviour to relenting Peter, — "if thou lovest me, feed my sheep, feed my lambs." Who *can* feed the sheep, except he love the Shepherd? Who can speak of Christ, and for Christ, in those natural tones of affection which penetrate the heart, and reveal him from experience to experience, except he love him? And who that has felt in his own soul the redeeming touch of Jesus; who, in whose heart the "light of the Father's glory has shined in the face of his Son," — has any news so glad to tell, any gospel he so burns to preach, any motive to press upon men in the energy and efficacy of which he has such assured, such boundless confidence?

Gratitude to him who has redeemed us, and given to us "the power to become the sons of God," — gratitude to God in Christ, — now twice our Father, since he has manifested himself in the Son, — is the deepest of all motives. It is the power of God unto salvation to every soul that believeth.

When a human soul, conscious of its moral needs,

its infirmities, selfishness, sin, and shame, — conscious of the fearful attitude in which sin places it towards a just and holy God; longing for deliverance from this bondage; longing for a sweet and perfect sense of filial love and peace towards the heavenly Father, but finding it not, and finding that it is powerless to redeem itself, — receives the truth that the Father hath sent the Son from his bosom to *give* it deliverance, and has accomplished this deliverance by his all-sacrificing love; and when, through faith, — which this glorious truth itself awakens, — it has accepted and appropriated to itself this redemption, it has not only "received the most sublime and affecting thought that can enter the mind of man or angel," but its whole being is penetrated and pervaded with such a reviving glow of mingled wonder, joy, hope, gratitude, and love, as no other possible experience could produce. "Old things are passed away," — old doubts and fears and servitude; old depression, apprehension, and unrest; old opposition, alienation, and rebellion of the will, — and, "behold, all things are become new!" The slave of yesterday is the dear son of to-day. The chains have dropped from his soul; the burden has fallen from his conscience; the darkness has dispersed from his spirit. One blessed vision spreads over all existence, past, present, and to come, beautifying all, softening all, harmonizing all; chasing all gloom away; irradiating earth and

heaven, time and eternity, and the depths of his own nature, with a flood of light more glorious than the waves of dawn, — it is the glory of the Father's infinite love, which is rising upon his mind, and shining in his heart in the face of the Son, the Redeemer.

The preaching, then, of the Lord Jesus Christ is more than the preaching of the doctrines he taught, the precepts he inculcated, the virtues he enjoined. It is not only to point out to men the narrow way of life which he described, and to set forth his own character as an example and a guiding light to those who would walk therein. It is all this, indeed; but it is more, much more, than this. It has other, higher themes. It has sweeter, richer strains. It has deeper mysteries of the divine love to reveal. It deals with more quickening motives; with powers of moral effect which no finite mind can measure.

It is the preaching of the reconciliation of man to God by Jesus Christ; "to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." It is the preaching of the surpassing love of Christ, "who died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." It is the preaching of "Christ crucified, the wisdom and the power of God." It is the preaching of him in whom "he who believeth,

though he were dead, yet shall he live; and, if living, shall never die." It is the preaching of him who is "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." It is the preaching of such a manifestation of the divine compassion in the voluntary humiliation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God, as can melt and break even the hardest heart; making it soft for a new impression of the Father's image, and open to the inspiration of a new life.

It does more, far more, than show the way of duty, and teach and illustrate the divine law. It might explain and enforce that law for ever, in all its strictness, purity, and beauty: — "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." It might show me how perfectly Jesus kept this law; how lovely, how venerable, how adorable, his life. But all this I have often acknowledged. I have always admired Christ's life. I have often confessed my duty. Yet how have I obeyed? how *can* I obey? I have disobeyed; I am disobedient still. That which I ought, and sometimes would, I do not: that which I ought not, and fain would not, I do.

You must do more than tell me my duty, and give me an example of its perfect performance. How *can* I love God with all my heart? Love is not a thing to be produced by a command. Love is not a thing to be enkindled by an exercise of the will. How could I,

by willing, love? Love must be produced only from within. It must be kindled in the depths of our nature. I could not produce, I could not kindle it towards God. In the depths of the believing nature God himself kindled it, when he manifested in Christ his redeeming love. Love springs unconstrained from the inward experience of redemption.*

Thus God himself, who gave the law, gives us power to fulfil the law. He kindles the love he commands. He buys the love he enjoins. The fulness of his own love flows down into our hearts; breaks over their selfishness and fear and doubt like a resistless tide, and floods them with a sweet and holy unction from on high, which disposes and empowers them to become his spiritual children.

What will not, what cannot, that man do and bear for Christ's sake, who realizes his redemption through the price of his sufferings; who realizes the deep joy, the spiritual freedom, the glorious hope, the blessed sense of eternal safety, of abundant pardon and peace with God, and childlike nearness to the Father, which — in addition to deliverance from the bondage of sin — that life-giving Friend has communicated to his heart? What have not such men done and suffered in all ages of the church? For Christ's

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* I have seen this thought beautifully expressed somewhere in the writings of Neander. The precise words, as well as the connection in which they occur, have escaped my recollection.

sake, all sacrifices are welcome, all burdens light, all sufferings easy.

What considerations addressed to the reason or the conscience can compare in power with this great motive of the gospel? You may try all other methods, and try them in vain. You may expostulate, urge, importune, threaten, to no purpose. But the love of the personal Saviour draws the soul away from its evil inclinations; breaks the power of vicious habits; draws the evil principle out of the heart; infuses a holy power to do what he demands; makes the law which he beautified beautiful, and the virtue which he exemplified an object of passion. Faith in him who was lifted up for our sake, evermore lifts up the human heart to himself, to heaven, to God. Faith in him who died and rose again for us, evermore raises the soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Faith in the cross of redemption,— the faith that takes home the Saviour's sorrows and humiliation to our own sin and shame,— fastens all the affections to that crucified Friend, with a clasp too strong for tribulation to break, too tenacious for earth's allurements to relax, too warm for worldliness to chill, too firm for death itself to destroy.

The believing and grateful soul says to its Saviour, —"If *Thou* askest of me this sacrifice, I cannot refuse Thee. If Thou demandest this duty, I cannot deny Thee. If Thou pleadest with me to forsake

this sin, I must yield." The more so because he not only bids it do, but gives the conquering strength. He not only calls it to come upward, but twines his strong arm about it, and goes with it, and keeps it through all the path. It feels with the apostle, and shall feel ever more and more, — "By him the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The world that crucified my soul's dearest friend, how shall I love it? Sin made itself odious to my heart, when it mocked and scourged my Saviour. Then it manifested its true spirit; its disguised beauty was stripped off; it dropped its painted mask; it dealt a fatal blow to itself.

What doctrine, then, is most *practical* to preach, to lead men to repentance, to animate, to win them to a virtuous and godly life? What motives are best adapted to work like levers upon the human heart to raise it up to God? Is it not the doctrine of God's redeeming love in the suffering Messiah? Are they not the very motives which operated so powerfully upon the heart of the great apostle himself? Say not, then, that the preaching of Christ crucified is not practical preaching. Reproach not human nature by suggesting that it has lost its power. Reproach not your own hearts by admitting that its power over them, if it could only get a hold upon them through faith, would fall short of its measure over other hearts in earlier ages of the church.

If we preached to you the law of moral perfection, — the rule of a perfect obedience, — the obligation to live a sinless life, — without the gospel of redemption, *that* would indeed be impracticable; that would be to lay upon human nature a burden which it could not and would not bear. But preaching the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, we present not only the standard and pattern of a perfect righteousness, but the life-giving power, and the love-kindling inspiration. We present moral perfection not only to your admiration and reverence, but also to your gratitude and love, in the image of the dearest Friend, in the person of your dying Redeemer.

To gratitude and love, all things become easy. To gratitude and love, the impossible becomes possible. With gratitude and love, God left his Son; trusting — oh! not without reason — that they would give him a home in the human heart, that he might work within it for its purification from sin, and its full reconciliation unto Himself. We cannot, of ourselves, be perfect; but, thank God, we *can love him whose love for us was stronger than death;* and, thank God, that Saviour, making his abode in the heart which loves him, can renew and sanctify it wholly.

Again: the love of the Lord Jesus Christ as Redeemer, vitally uniting, as it does, the believer to himself, *constitutes the true bond of union with the*

true and living church of Christ. For the true church is not an "ecclesiasticism." The title to its membership is not subscription to articles; not a formal attachment to an organization; but a deep, spiritual sympathy, which indeed spontaneously seeks to confess, express, and organize itself in a visible and actual communion; but the ground of which is to be found in the one holy spirit of which all sincere believers in Christ are partakers, — that new and divine nature which becomes the property of all those who, by faith, receive the Son of God into their hearts. The "spiritual conjunction of the members to the Head" is the true foundation of the communion which subsists, and shall for ever subsist, between the members themselves. Through their participation of his Spirit, they are of one family, one brotherhood. Receiving his moral image, they have an essential family likeness. Attracted towards him, as the central object of their allegiance and aspirations, they are attracted towards each other, and — even though they know it not, and though it is not outwardly apparent — are, in the sight of God, dwelling and moving and working in harmony. As he is one with God, so they, becoming one with him, become one with the Father, and one with all the children of God.

The true and eternal fellowship, — that communion which can never be even so much as in danger of being interrupted or disturbed, — must, of necessity,

be a perfect spiritual sympathy. No external bonds could produce it, no pledges could insure it, no legal restraints could maintain it. It must have its source and its security in an essential unity of spirit. Moreover, the *nature* of this spirit must be divine. That the communion may be perfect and eternal, it must be a "fellowship with the Father." Its ground, therefore, is to be sought not in human nature, but in the divine nature, which the Father communicates through the Son,—the "eternal life" which quickens and flows into all those who are vitally united to Christ, as branches to the vine.

This blessed spiritual community should have a sacred, a peculiar name. It should have a name which expresses the essential fact of its connection with Christ as its Head, its dependence upon him as its foundation. It should have a name which implies a higher than all human relations, a holier than all worldly ties. It should have a name which involves the idea of a sacred covenant with the Son of God, a confession of him, a solemn consecration, a gathering, in reverence, love, humility, and sweet confidence, around the hallowed symbols of Christ's sacrifice and Christ's presence. It should have a peculiar and a sacred name; for it is a peculiar and sacred relation. It is the Church, the Bride of Christ.

But I must hasten to bring to a close this already protracted discourse.

If we believe that Jesus Christ himself — nothing beside, nothing more, and nothing less — is the "foundation," — the foundation of the Church, the foundation of preaching, the only foundation on which the individual soul can securely rest its knowledge of the true God, and its hopes of eternal life, — then we must see to it, so far as in us lies, that we keep beneath ourselves this foundation sure and steadfast, and suffer none, whom it is our duty to teach in the name of Christ, to mistake any other foundation for the true; to be beguiled, even though it were by an angel from heaven, into doubts of the validity, the necessity, of the only foundation that God has laid.

I believe, my friends, that the time is at hand when all other controversies amongst Christians shall be laid aside for the one great controversy that shall sift and try opinions and positions with reference to "THE FOUNDATION." The great warfare is to be between the true Church on the one side, and all the strongholds of philosophy and scepticism, the airy castles of human imagination and high conceits, on the other, on the one momentous issue, whether Jesus is "the Christ," "the Lord from heaven," "the express image of the Father," to whom "all power is given in heaven and in earth," to whom has been "appointed an everlasting kingdom," whom every tongue should confess, and to whom "every knee should bow, and every thought be brought into captivity."

All other controversies, compared with this, are unessential. This touches the vital nerve of the gospel. This concerns the truth or falsehood of the testimony of Jesus himself and of his apostles. This involves the whole system of Christian doctrine. On this hinges the struggle between insidious, wide-spreading, many-headed Pantheism, and the doctrine of the living, personal God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom no man knoweth save he to whom the Son shall reveal him. This decides the sufficiency or insufficiency of the Church's security and the believer's peace.

All those who are heartily on the Lord's side in this contest belong together. They have an essential unity, a common cause, a common leader, a common life. *They will come together.* They are already coming. From one denomination and another, their hearts are flowing together, as love flows towards love. Over the pales of party their hands are reaching for a fraternal clasp. They need each other. They will need each other yet more and more. And the Lord's work hath need of them all.

But does some zealous sectarian meet us with the objection, that the ground of union we have presented is not sufficiently definite, positive, and fundamental, to satisfy the requirements of the gospel? Does he insist upon our looking under and around and into the "foundation" itself; and answering all

the questions he may propound concerning the mysteries of its nature and substance, the "how and the why" of its efficacy, — and answering them, too, in exact accordance with his own theory, — before he will acknowledge the validity of our Christian faith, and will consent to stand with us, shoulder to shoulder, in the great battle of the Lord? Let him so object and insist, if he will. If he does so reluctantly, and only at the stern bidding of conscience, we will not reproach him. If he does so from a bigoted and arrogant spirit, we will pity him. Whatever his reason or his motive, he shall be safe from our reviling. Let him so object, if he will, — if he must. His responsibility is "to his own Master." We ask no concessions from any man or any party. We are not anxious for any human certificate of the sincerity of our discipleship. We ask nothing for our own sake. We are not pleading our own cause.

But for the sake of Christian truth and love, for the sake of the spirit and the cause of Christ, we are constrained to offer a few words in reply to the objection alluded to.

If we heartily acknowledge Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," as the "Lord from heaven," as "anointed with all authority and power," who does not see that we cannot stand in wilful opposition to any truth he has revealed; but must, for consistency's sake at least, hold ourselves pre-

pared to accept it, whenever any Christian brother, or the illumination of the Spirit, shall show it to us in his teachings? Who does not see that there can be no duty he has enjoined which we do not stand pledged to endeavor to fulfil? Though we may feel bound to keep open some speculative questions with regard to his nature, yet, meanwhile, acknowledging without qualification the highest titles given to him in the New Testament itself, we shall "honor the Son even as we honor the Father." Who could ask of us more? who can render him higher honor than this? Believing him when he says that the "Father hath given to the Son to have life in himself, and to quicken whom he will," we shall submit our souls to him to be regenerated. Relying on his promise, that he "will save to the uttermost all that come to God through him," through him we shall go to God, and humbly hope that we shall be saved. Believing that he will send the Comforter to abide with those who obediently love him, and to lead them into all truth, we shall open and cleanse our hearts for the entrance of this Holy Guide, this blessed guest. There is no office which Christ holds, no relation which he sustains to God or man, no agency which he exerts for the soul's redemption, which we shall not devoutly acknowledge, or earnestly inquire into, or fervently desire to become the subjects of. Receiving the sublime testimony that "in him are hid all the treasures

of wisdom and knowledge," we shall not imagine that Christianity can ever be exhausted or out-grown, — ever be wholly analyzed or systematized, or over-topped and left behind by science or philosophy, — but shall sympathize with Paul's own prayer, in which both his mighty intellect and his deep heart conspired, "that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that we may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God."

With such a faith as this in the "one and only Lord Jesus Christ;" holding thus loyally to "the Head," standing thus immovably upon the "foundation," bowing the knee thus submissively to the Son of God, giving him "in all things pre-eminence," trusting to him for salvation, grateful to him for redemption, loving him as the Friend "who laid down his life" for us, — we are not, we cannot be, separated by any impassable barrier, cut off by any chilling gulf of interrupted sympathy, from the great body of believers and confessors of every age. "We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." Holding fast to this vital substance of the

gospel, — the living and life-giving Saviour, the medium of every spiritual blessing, the corner-stone of the true church, — what do we lack, what material, what motive, what obligation, what help, what inspiration, — that we may not serve the cause and kingdom of our blessed Lord, and "coming to him, as unto a LIVING STONE, we also, as lively stones, be built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"?

What do we lack in order to this end, except it be in ourselves, — through our own negligence, perversity, and faithlessness? Why shall we not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called? Why shall we not defend the gospel by our lips, and adorn it with our lives? Why shall we not consult and work and pray together with all who serve Christ, — according to his commandment, — for the salvation and reconciliation of the world? Why shall not the bright light of our combined charity shine abroad upon the dark places of the earth, the clouded minds, the desolate hearts, the children of oppression, the slaves of sin, like the Redeemer's own smile, "when he preached the acceptable year of the Lord, and all eyes were fastened on him;" and thus glorify, and lead others to glorify, "our Father who is in heaven"? Why not? why not?

Brethren, it rests with ourselves. We have a noble

field. We have a rare opportunity. Only let us be faithful. Let each one of us be obedient to his only Master; loyal to his Prince; united to his living Head, as "a member in particular." Let each love the Brotherhood; stand in his own lot; fulfil his own office; "quit himself like a man."

"I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, I charge you in the name of Christ, that ye use not this grace of God in vain."

CHARGE,

BY REV. E. S. GANNETT, D.D.

Dear Sir, — As, in asking one of your brethren in the ministry to give you a Charge to be faithful to the work on which you now enter, you did not mean to convey an intimation that you doubted the sincerity of your own purpose, we who have come hither to participate in the solemnities of this occasion, by acceding to your request, do not intend to express any want of confidence in the stability of that purpose. You and we concur in adopting a usage recommended alike by intrinsic value and by historical associations. If you were now for the first time assuming the responsibilities of the clerical office, our counsel would take the tone rather of suggestion than of dictation; for we claim, and you would allow, no authority to stand between your soul and him whom alone you or we call Master. Coming to this field of labor from one to which you have already devoted many of the best years of your life, it is the interpretation of your own thoughts, early entertained, but chastened and matured by subsequent experience, that you have a right to expect from us, rather than advice which, by affecting originality, would lose both modesty and pertinency.

Under the various circumstances which belong to place and period, to differences in condition and civilization, distinguishing the Western continent from the Eastern, and our age from past ages, the purpose and character of a Christian minister's labors remain essentially the same. As in the beginning, so now, the object which he pursues is the moral and spiritual elevation of man; and the means which he uses, the "glorious gospel of the blessed God." By the Divine Spirit impelling him, and the Divine Providence affording him the needful opportunity, he is constituted a messenger of the heavenly grace to sinful men; and only when he construes his position in this sense does he rightly comprehend, or can he faithfully execute, the service which he undertakes. Without the immediate inspiration of an apostle, or an apostle's broad commission, he is yet intrusted with the same truths and clothed with the same functions as the original preachers of Christianity; and therefore, however the details may differ, the principles which should govern him are coincident with those which Titus and Timothy, Apollos and Paul, James and Peter, acknowledged as authoritative with them. Whatever you may find to have been their guiding motive and strong delight, you must accept as dearest and most imperative with you; and, as you can learn what these were only from the New Testament, you must gather from the New Testament your first, and final, instruction in regard to your professional life.

Recurring to that volume, you read, as there written in characters of imperishable distinctness, the charge, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Eliminating the peculiarity of that world-wide service which devolved on the founders of the Christian Church, you discover in this emphatic passage a description of your work in its

two great departments of doctrinal and practical discourse, whether as you shall take up that discourse in the weekly offices of this pulpit, or as you shall pursue it in your more familiar address from house to house. In respect to doctrine, the Author and Finisher of the faith has himself given us the one comprehensive formula, — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We show an inadequate appreciation of its value by simply calling it the baptismal form. The apostles interpreted it in a much higher sense, as the symbolic expression of the new faith. The Church has shown a still poorer estimation of its value, in adding clauses about Trinity and Unity, of which we find no trace in the apostolic writings. He who will be content with the use which, according to the evangelists, our Lord made of these terms, alike in his public discourses and in his more private teaching, will find no difficulty in regard to their meaning, their importance, their mutual relation, or their character as a compend of the gospel. Let the three topics of your preaching, in their infinite diversity of illustration, be the God to whom Jesus has taught us to pray as to "our Father in heaven;" the Saviour, whom he declares worthy to bear the title of the Son of God, because "the Father sanctified him, and sent him into the world;" and the Holy Spirit, which he has told us "the Father will send in his name" to "dwell with us and in us," — let these topics furnish the material of your preaching, and you cannot depart far from "the faith once delivered to the saints." Dishonor these topics by your silence, and, though you exhibit more than Demosthenian strength or Ciceronian grace, your preaching will have no more of the Christian element than an ingenious critic might extract from the old Pagan literature.

As a guide for the preceptive part of sermon or conversation, what more can you desire, or what can you have better, than the final direction of Christ to his disciples, that they

should teach men "to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them"? From his lips you must take the injunction you shall lay on their consciences. You must be a pupil before you can be a teacher; going from the feet of Jesus to the seat of instruction. In too many of our congregations there is an impatience of any other than "practical preaching." I know not what the taste or demand of this people may be; but this I know, that, the more your preaching shall resemble that to which the multitude listened as they stood around the Galilean hill, the more practical will it be in tone and effect. And of this also may I remind you, that all good living must have a basis of belief on which to rest. The Christian righteousness grows out of the root of divine truth; and the farmer might as well expect to gather fruit from the fence with which he encloses his field, as the Christian minister to make good men by delivering mere moral discourses. We must be believers, if we would be saints. Therefore, do not withhold clear or sufficient dogmatic instruction. Enable your people to explain and justify to themselves their own faith; and upon this foundation rear a superstructure of practical counsel, that shall have the commandments of the Lord as its framework. You need not leave Christ in order to expose the sins of the day. The most timely preaching is a reproduction of the Saviour's words in connection with present circumstances; as it is the same light that shone on the palm-groves and olive-trees of Judea, which gives its rich shades to our American foliage. In respect to this style of sermon, let me caution you against an error into which both ministers and congregations sometimes fall. There is a great difference between preaching to the times and preaching at the times; the same difference that there is between persuading a man and provoking him. I doubt if we do the world much good by making it angry.

That you may justly discharge the functions of the mini-

sterial office, let me address to you the advice which Paul sent to Timothy: "Give thyself wholly to these things." It is advice which, like a two-edged sword, strikes down indulgence on this side and on that, — the indulgence of sloth, and the indulgence of taste. "Give thyself *wholly*;" that is plain and decisive language. Wholly. Keep back nothing. Devote all your energies, physical and mental, to this work. Do your best; do your utmost. Justify the application to yourself of that title, better than any ever worn by dignitary or prelate, — "a *workman* that needeth not to be ashamed." There are no cardinals nor bishops, thank God, under our Congregational polity; but God be thanked that there is not one of us who may not be a "workman." And the work is worthy of all the strength we can bring to it. It needs all our ability and all our industry. It requires all the force and all the skill and all the culture and all the zeal we can lend to it. It demands men who will work in sight and out of sight, in their pulpits and in their studies. Of all the exhibitions that wound a Christian sensibility, what exceeds the spectacle of a man standing before immortal fellow-men, and talking to them of sin and judgment and eternity as a nurse would sing her lullabies to a baby? Of all the unworthy uses of a social position, what goes farther than his who reclines on the respect and confidence of his people, like an invalid on his couch, — getting the reward, indeed, of his indolence in chronic infirmities of the mind? My friend, be you a student. Read, think, write, for your own improvement, that your "profiting may appear to all." This is not an age of the world in which a minister may have an easy time. He has no right to it; and, if he had, the world would not let him enjoy it. Men are wanted of clear and vigorous minds, well trained and well stored, to encounter the keen scepticism and to overthrow the manful worldliness of the times. Never was there a period in the history of the Church

when a union of knowledge and fervor was more important in the expounders of the gospel.

"Give thyself wholly to *these* things;" a plain hint that other things must be left to other men. You will find enough to do in your own vocation, — various as well as constant employment. Content yourself with being a good minister. Do not let circumstances tempt you to dilute your consecration to this service with worldly engagement of any sort. Do not covet occupation, still less distinction, in any other walk of life. It may be advantageous to the health of both body and mind that you should handle the spade or the plane, just as it will increase your relish and digestion of spiritual truth to take up often a lighter kind of study. But use all these exercises not only as subordinate, but as subsidiary, to your professional usefulness. Have one purpose in life, — to make your people ripe for heaven. Be not diverted from this purpose by opportunity or solicitation. Exercise your rights as a citizen, but leave political action to those who have time for it. If the town should propose to send you to the Legislature or to Congress, tell them you really cannot afford to go; for it will cost you what neither three hundred nor three thousand dollars a session would repay. Even the interests of education must not obtain too great a share of your time. Do not be ambitious to serve on the School Committee. It certainly may be a question, whether the New-England practice of putting this task on the clergymen of the town be altogether wise or just. By those who faithfully perform what is imposed on them, I know it is often found to be a serious diversion of time from other more strictly appropriate labors. A less close and responsible connection with the schools has become a privilege which they have a right to claim, in view of the multiplied professional requisitions to which they are subject on the one hand, and of the greatly augmented demands which our progressive system of educa-

tion makes upon its friends, on the other hand. The one word which best describes the spirit of a minister's life is *consecration.* You belong not to yourself, but to the Lord. You are his servant, for whom you must live, even as he, your Master, lives in you. I charge you not to make your removal to this place the occasion of any loss of diligence. Rather "stir thou up the gift of God," which was committed to thee at thy induction into the office of a Christian pastor. Do not exult in the thought that you have a desk full of sermons ready for use. If I might utter a word of strictly private counsel, I would suggest to you, my friend, the propriety of putting those manuscripts under lock and key, and then forgetting where you have put the key. You ought to be able to write better sermons now than you wrote when you were a younger man. But it requires a great deal of courage and conscience to sit down before sixteen pages of blank paper, when, by opening a drawer at one's right hand, he can substitute for them just that number of well-written pages which none of his congregation have ever seen. I do not mean to impute to you any other weakness "but such as is common to man;" and I am sure that you will devote yourself, in hand and heart, to the great religious objects of which our present Installation services are a pledge and a type.

A single-hearted dedication of yourself to the true ends of the ministry will secure you in the enjoyment of an independence, without which your efficiency must be crippled. This independence is endangered, not only by assault from abroad, but by an involuntary deference arising out of the admiration we feel for those who are successful in an enterprise like our own. Be not eager to resemble any one of your contemporaries; since a man's strength always lies in what belongs to him as his own, not in what he has borrowed. Be true to your own nature. God has made us to differ, and each one must excel in his own way. Peculiari-

ties may be both innocent and helpful, if they be natural; but, if acquired, they are a weight and an offence. Be neither a servile copyist, nor an ambitious rival. According to the best judgment of those who have heard Spurgeon, the meteor of the day in London, he owes his success to the unquestionable sincerity with which he propounds his amazing sophistries and deals out his coarse denunciations. Men love honesty everywhere; but, most of all, in the pulpit. A mocking-bird astonishes us; but we soon grow weary of astonishment: while the bobolink of our woods never tires us with his note, nor the robin, nor even the sparrow. Peril to one's truthfulness comes in part from the constraint under which many persons are put by social opinion. They are afraid to differ from those whom they respect or love. It is a subtle influence, which, when resisted, sometimes produces a disagreeable bluntness or obstinacy, either of which is a detriment to a minister's usefulness. The only effectual means of protection against this influence lies in that unconscious superiority which is seen in one so entirely engaged in his work, that the thought of others' judgment does not find room to lodge in his mind. Real independence belongs to him who thinks least about it. The rights of the pulpit are most likely to be maintained by one who never speaks of them, because he feels no anxiety lest they should be invaded. I have never yet seen reason to believe that the people of New England wish to listen to one whom they have robbed of the power of free speech; and I cannot doubt that he who is least jealous of an interference with his own privileges will have least occasion for their defence.

In the details of your ministry, distinct from the prominent function of preaching, let the same purpose control, the same spirit animate you, as in the exercise of that function. In the Conference-room and the Sunday school, with the Bible class and the social meeting, in your pastoral visits

and in your interviews with the sick and the bereaved, seek one result as the goal of your various yet concurrent efforts; to wit, the redemption of human souls from the tyranny and ruin of sin. Everywhere keep in mind the two great facts of the Christian life, — birth and growth, the beginning and the progress; in the New-Testament language, regeneration and sanctification. Be not satisfied with promoting good neighborhood and preventing social disorder. It is only an incident of our religion, that it acts as the world's police. Its visible effects are the consequence of an inward operation; the consciousness, that innermost retreat of our personality, is the seat of its power. To implant Christian sentiments in the heart is the surest way to produce an exhibition of the social virtues. The relations which men sustain to God are immeasurably more important than those which they hold to one another. The destinies of immortality who shall think of comparing with the success or misfortune that may attend on any worldly enterprise? Now, it is your business to present these primary relations and final destinies in such terms as shall arrest attention, compel belief, inspire a sense of duty, and create an experience of the peace which "passeth all understanding." Not I, not we who are assembled in sympathy with your own hope, but the providence of God and the cross of Christ charge you not to evade or imperil the high commission which you bear as one who in Christ's name should beseech men to be reconciled to God. Hark! my brother. Hear you not the smothered cries of want and ignorance and fear, entreating you to come to their rescue? Hear you not the voice of Jesus saying from the midst of his toil and his death, "Fill ye up" what remaineth of the agencies of mercy? Hear you not the command of God, to "spend and be spent" for the salvation of those whom you may guide from the paths of destruction to the city of refuge? Bear you every thing,

and brave every thing, rather than the remembrance of a superficial or perfunctory service at the altar on which the Lamb of God was offered a voluntary sacrifice "for the sins of the people."

In your private character, be you "an example to the believers." In these days, when the old reverence for the clergy has given way to a captious or indignant criticism, there is more need than ever that the minister of religion should be a man of blameless life. His influence hangs on his character. If men respect him for his integrity and consistency, they will give heed to what he says; if they do not, he becomes to them a mere clerical demagogue. Do not be afraid of showing the quality of your mind. Let it be seen that you are "a man of God." Because you should not sink the man in the minister, you need not sink the minister in the man. Lay aside gown and bands if you please, the white cravat and the black coat (though they are not without their use through the force of association); but do not lay aside the seriousness, the dignity, the prudence, or the meekness, which become a servant of Jesus Christ, while engaged in his household. If they be nothing but the livery which shows who is your Master, that livery you are bound to wear. Before men, be you without reproach; and, if possible, before God. Keep a pure conscience and a clean heart in His sight who seeth what is within us. "Take heed to yourself," for the ministry has its peculiar temptations. Beware of the influence of praise on the simplicity of your character, and beware of the tendency of habit to sink into routine. Freshen your piety by constant prayer. Invigorate your faith by continual obedience. Illustrate your teaching by your own example. There may seem to be little difference between a minister who rejoices in his work, and one who goes through its duties mechanically; and yet it is the difference between freedom

and bondage. In the same train of cars which bore some of your friends to unite in the satisfactions of this hour were a company of prisoners, handcuffed, and forced to travel through the sweet summer morning, with all nature smiling around them. Yet their hearts received no pleasurable excitement from the motion or the scenery. They went as they were carried, because circumstances were stronger than they. I think I have seen some ministers who wore the handcuffs of habit, and moved along the road of life with a dull unconcern, prisoners of a condition stronger than their own will. Let your heart be in your ministry, and let it bear you every day nearer to heaven.

My brother, we leave you with special contentment amidst the promises of this day. You have come hither to fair prospects of usefulness. You enter on a work prepared for you by diligent hands. You have not resided too far from this place to be familiar with its history. You know what men have preceded you in the position you now fill. Here, for half a century, stood one whose life was a daily gospel. Here with him, and after him, served one whose fewer years were made memorable by the illumination of a saintly excellence. And here has labored one who faithfully lived and faithfully taught, till disease insinuated its poison into his frame, and, convinced at last that he must relinquish the employment which he loved, he sought to regain health in one of the isles of the sea; only, alas! to furnish another proof of the uncertainty of human hope. Men like these have not failed to leave their impress on individual and social life here. With such examples to stimulate you, with the Bible as your manual, and the cross as your symbol, how can you but be true to the solemn import of your present meditations? From the mingled emotions of your own bosom, as well as from many a well-filled hour of service on this spot, from the opportunities with which you are en-

compassed, and from the consequences which they may draw after them, comes the charge, "Be thou faithful unto death;" while from another world descends the promise, even as a responsive melody, "And I will give thee a crown of life."

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY REV. THOMAS HILL.

The brethren of the council have instructed me to comply with your request, and to give you, at this time, a word of welcome as you enter this new field of labor. In their name, and in the name of the churches which they represent, I heartily give you the right hand of fellowship, and assure you of our earnest sympathy with you; and of our prayers on your behalf, that you may, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, have wisdom, courage, and strength to occupy this post well, to the benefit of those intrusted to your charge, and to the acceptance of the Head of the church. While we feel how great the loss which this flock sustain in the failing health of one who had for so many years been so steadfast and unwearied in his care for them, and how great the loss which his brethren in the ministry and the churches, which we represent, suffer in being deprived of his fellowship and counsel, we rejoice that his place is now supplied in you by one who is no novice in the word of God, but who has had personal experience of all the difficulties and discouragements, of all the satisfactions and rewards, that await a faithful discharge of the pastoral office. By this right hand of fellowship, we would express our sense of the closeness of that tie which binds our churches together, making us one body in Christ; and acknowledge our obligation to give you cordial sympathy

and efficient help, if in any case you should need our aid. At the same time we know, that which you also know, that the aid of human sympathy and of man's wisdom is nothing to one who has not daily fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Our right hand of fellowship we would, therefore, make one of fellowship in the Lord; encouraging you by the sympathy of Christian faith and Christian prayer, rather than by the offer of our own aid and our own counsel.

But permit me, my brother, while offering you the pledge of Christian fellowship, also to add to it my own personal assurance of friendship and good-will. We have enjoyed many years of acquaintance, springing up through our interchange of ministerial offices; and I am glad to welcome you to a closer acquaintance, as pastor of a parish more intimately connected with my own. May the years of our future intercourse be many, and may we find that intercourse each year more pleasant and more edifying! May we be each year more truly helpers of each other in fulfilling the office to which we have been called, — the ministry of Christ; the persuading of our fellow-men to be reconciled to God; the unfolding to them of the treasures in the word of life; the infusion into them of that faith in Jesus Christ which is our own hope here, and which we trust is to be our joy hereafter!

ADDRESS TO THE SOCIETY.

BY REV. GEORGE E. ELLIS, D.D.

Brethren and Friends of this Church and Society, —

A few additional words, beginning with congratulation, followed by counsel, and closing with an appeal addressed especially to you, will complete these services. Providence having prematurely — as we say — closed the ministry among you of one of the most faithful and devoted Christian teachers and pastors, you have been left just long enough alone to be ready to welcome one of your own choice, who comes to try to fill his place. After a season of random ministrations, — that poor method of modern indifference or fastidiousness, — without any pastor, you have again an opportunity to learn how the two offices of the Christian minister supplement and help each other. Therefore you are to be congratulated upon the prospects and the promises of this your new pastorate. He is not a novice whom you welcome to-day, but a proved laborer who has been found faithful. Receive him henceforward to your hearts; treat him with confidence, respect, kindness, and generosity; and exact of him the full service of his time, his mind, his sympathy, his faith and piety. That is what you owe to him, and what he owes to you. If those obligations are mutually discharged, time and Providence will ripen good results.

The word of counsel to be addressed to you, as a Society, does not need to be sharpened or pointed by any censures

or reflections connected with your recent history. We have not heard of any contentions among you, nor of any faults but such as are common to men; though these are many, and some of them are very bad ones. On the contrary, this Parish has an enviable repute for stable and peaceful relations among its members, and for fidelity to the great objects of Christian edification and benevolence. It has an honored history. If we were to forecast the auspices of this installation service by your past history, there would be every thing to cheer and encourage your minister. He enters into the labors of honored and good men, well appreciated and faithfully sustained by you. I well remember a mistake into which I fell near a quarter of a century ago, — it was not, after all, much of a mistake, — while listening, at a religious meeting in Anniversary Week, to a venerable man of modest presence, of earnest words, and devout tones, and profound wisdom. I was told he was from Concord, and I naturally thought he was the minister of Concord. You may suppose I am referring to the good Dr. Ripley. But no. Him I saw too, and loved to look upon and to hear afterwards. He to whom I refer was not the minister of Concord, — I believe, not even a deacon. But he was a most ministerial man; a pillar of the church, an exemplary and most valuable member of it; wise and pure and earnest in every Christian duty and enterprise; a man whom all Christians of every name loved, because he had that ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price, and, in the sight of man, is beyond all price. One layman like the late excellent Mr. Hoar, so deserving of regard and so securing it, would give a character to a parish. Ripley and Goodwin and Frost — what is written on your records about them is, in one sense, a sketch of your own purposes and attainments as a Christian society: for, where such men have labored, even hard soil would

produce something; and you are said to have yielded kindly to such tillage as theirs.

With such omens for you and your new minister, our counsel to you is to hold to and keep all that has been good and gracious and faithful in your past history; and, under a change of times and ways and circumstances, — for times and ways and circumstances do greatly change, — rest on your old foundations of Christian faith, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

There has been a great deal written — for the most part in praise, though in something of distrust — about *the voluntary system* by which religion has been sustained and fostered in its institutions among us. Our free-parish system, which has dotted the country over with places of worship, and maintained the ministry, generally with a decent generosity, has often been set in broad contrast with the State religions, and their compulsory support, their Simony and Erastianism, in the Old World. Those arguments, however, have imagined the facts upon which they proceed, and have anticipated a state of things which in reality never existed until this our own time. As a matter of fact, we have but just begun the trial of the voluntary system in religion. We had as stringent laws for taxation, as exacting uses and provisions and customs, in support of the gospel, as ever prevailed among any Christian people, until quite recently in our history; and, when the compulsion of the tax was relaxed, the force of tradition, habit, respectability, decent regards, and "the fear of the folk," operated almost as stringently to engage our citizens in the support of, and generally in the attendance on, religious institutions. But all that is changing now.

Our own generation is really the first to put on trial the true voluntary system in religion, without compulsion or constraint. Every man now, as to that matter, is at perfect

liberty to do what is right in his own eyes, even if he go the length of doing what is wrong in the eyes of everybody else. We might know that such things were managed now by the free-will, not to say the self-will, of an extreme individualism, because there is such a large variety in opinion and action. Our churches do indeed stand now, and live upon, the unforced, spontaneous interest of those who worship in them. And another fact in this connection is of importance: Our religious societies have now a double duty to perform; namely, to sustain themselves, doing their own appropriate work within their own folds, and also to serve as witnesses and agencies of religion to perhaps an equal part of the community who keep aloof from the burden and the work of churches. The proportion of our population connected directly with our parishes is steadily decreasing, and so a vastly increased responsibility is thrown upon our churches and ministers. It remains to be proved by the next two generations, whether the life and vigor of our old organizations can be sustained under these exacting conditions. Perhaps it may appear, that these additional responsibilities are just what we need to awaken new zeal in all those blessed labors to which the everlasting gospel of the Lord Jesus is to call its disciples through all changing agencies and circumstances.

And so this church stands here, in this fair region of thrift and domestic comfort, as a symbol of all the precious lessons and influences of that gospel. With a solemn and ever-eloquent testimony has the value of these mighty religious agencies been proved here to those who have worshipped at this ancient altar, whose bodies rest in your green graveyards, whose memories linger fondly about your hearths, whose spirits await you in their everlasting homes. The gospel renews its sweet and holy power to keep you in fellowship with them, the living and the dead. The unchan-

ging truth receives its ever-consecrating efficacy from God and Christ. The works of piety which it has done once, it can do again with infinite variety and repetition; just as the baptismal water from these rills, which dedicated the first Christian infants born here, has again and again gone back to heaven to be purified for the same uses.

But this church, its regular services, its occasional offices, and its ordinances, must really engage your hearts, and have strong attractions for you as a Christian society.

It will not do to make the pulpit talents of the minister the main motive-impulse of attraction to the meeting-house on Sunday. Our New-England people especially have been falling into an error here, and the interests of religious institutions among us are feeling the effects of it. The courses of lyceum and miscellaneous lectures, which are provided for annually in our cities and towns, enlist the services of a few gifted men of extraordinary popular talents, who seize upon fascinating subjects, and treat them with a fantastic skill, and so are listened to with a lively interest by mixed and sometimes crowded audiences. These men, picked out of the whole mass of cultivated, scholarly, or eloquent writers and speakers in our communities, have a whole year for the composition of one or two of their lectures. They learn what is the popular taste, and they adapt themselves to it, not always trying or helping to improve it. Some of their lectures are really not half so good or sensible or instructive as ordinary sermons. If you were to take them apart, you could not put them together again. Occasionally they are positively unwholesome and mischievous.

But these lectures, such as they are, indicate, and help to fix, a standard for public discourses. People get the names of a few sparkling or racy lecturers on their lips, and are apt to judge of common preaching as it compares with the lively talk and the discursive essays of these itinerants. They call

preaching dull and commonplace by comparison. And so it is; just as a corn-field or grain-field or potato-field, or any other spread of acres covered with the substantial food or fodder of daily life, is dull in comparison with a little garden patch of peonies, marigolds and poppies, pinks and cox-combs. If some of these lyceum attendants could only overhear the secret banter of two or three itinerant lecturers as to the sort of stuff which *takes with people*, the homœopathic doses of sound wisdom and the lavish mixture of light nutriment which suits the popular fancy, perhaps such hearers might not be flattered by the information. Now, it may as well be confessed, that the preacher of weekly sermons cannot treat the commonplace themes of sober and homely truth so as to tickle itching ears. Altogether too much is expected of preaching; and that preaching which many people like most to hear does them the least benefit.

Experience has proved that the whole power of preaching depends upon its Christian element. The gospel invented preaching; and only when gospel-themes are treated in the gospel-spirit, and listened to as gospel, has preaching any really potent or edifying influence in it. Be content, then, if you can get gospel-preaching, — deriving its fervor from its truths, and its eloquence from the response of your own hearts. When hearers once allow themselves to get fastidious, restless, and critical about the routine Sunday services, they become amazingly ingenious in suggesting all sorts of changes and fancies to help out worship. One asks for chants, another for pictures, another for flowers, another for very short sermons, another for essays in astronomy or natural history. But a devout soul and a penitent heart is worth all of these devices. Occasionally, when the sermon is uninteresting, as will sometimes be the case to some hearers, it will be profitable to you to fall into a reverie, to lay out your sins and faults distinctly in the

panes of window-glass which you may be disposed to count, and then imagine the light of God's truth shining through them. The preacher will finish his work before you have done yours. It is good to come regularly and sit in the church, if not to listen, to reflect and pray by yourself. Sometimes the most constant and edified attendant is a deaf person, who does not hear a word.

It is a characteristic frailty of human nature — doubtless you have all of you noticed as well as exhibited it — to be the most exacting of duty and fidelity in others just in those matters in which we are most remiss ourselves. Where we fail in the doing of our own task, we expect our fellow-laborers to be especially industrious. What we leave undone is the very thing for others to prove their fidelity and zeal in making up for us. You may have observed that those who are the most careless and reckless about their own constitution and health are the most apt to expect magic wonders from the skill of a physician; as the epicure, who has for years been concentrating all sorts of rich wines and condiments in one joint of finger or toe, frets that the doctor does not drive out all the disease with a few tea-spoonfuls of his drugs, which are essentially the same things that have caused it. I suppose, too, there are farmers — young ones, at least — who would rather sharpen and adjust scythes and hoe-handles than bend steadily over the use of the implements. This common human frailty illustrates itself in a matter with which we are now more immediately concerned. The less religious people are themselves, the more do they always exact of their ministers; and the more they exact of him, the less they help him. Indeed, if you wish to get the very highest ideal description of what a Christian or a religious person ought to be, in piety, purity, heavenly-mindedness, unselfishness, and kindness, you must ask it, not of the saint, but of the sinner. The most irreligious people are the severest judges of reli-

gious professors: they who sign off from the ministry require the loftiest standard of influence from religion in a community. If our come-outers would only *stay out*, till they could come back into the fold again better disposed to secure self-edification and to aid in the edification of others, they would relieve very much of the censoriousness and acrimony now visited upon those who are trying, in a poor human way, to advance the general cause of righteousness.

I am afraid that one reason why the standard for power and zeal and talent and popular gifts in the ministry has been raised so high, of late years, is because there has been a real decline of religious knowledge, interest, and vitality in our congregations. A minister knows very well that those of his hearers to whom he is really of the least use are those who value him the most and appreciate him the best; that the most devout Bible-Christians, — the best informed in theological and religious reading, — the most active in lay-effort, are the most tolerant of a minister's shortcomings, and can most kindly allow for his poor endeavors. When the members of our societies were more generally acquainted with the Scriptures, — with controverted points and the marrow of divinity, — and were more generally observant, in domestic life and in their closets, of the old usages of piety and prayer, of grace and discipline, they got an amazing amount of nutriment out of sermons which would not be listened to now-a-days. They patiently tolerated dull ministers, and feeble and old ministers, whose numbers and necessities among us have compelled to the formation of a society for their relief. Our fathers required such a society only for the widows and orphans of ministers.

Let it then be remembered and considered, that the demand for such able and eloquent and pious ministers is, at least, not in itself a proof of more intelligent, devout, and pious congregations, but rather a token that such ministers

are called for to resist the growing, strengthening tide of worldliness, and to make up for the deficiencies of people in their own religious training, reading, effort, and education. Nothing would so much quicken the industry and zeal and ardor of a Christian minister in his study and his pulpit, and in his offices of sympathy and effort, as the knowledge that his hearers and parishioners were faithfully pursuing pious and benevolent methods of their own, running parallel with his labors for them. Be, then, students of divine truth with him, rather than mere listeners to his teaching; and walk with him in the order of the gospel, rather than rest content with having him show the way.

We appeal to you, then, as a society, to renew all your zeal and love and faith by entering with a fresh interest into the labors of this new ministry. It is a good time for paying off your debt, if you owe one. I have written in my notes, that it is a good time for repairing your church; but I see you have done that. It is especially a most propitious time for rectifying any little errors or healing any teasing animosities which the subjects of them wish to be rid of, but are ashamed to recognize, except under the propitious aid of an occasion like this. If any of you here have got soured about the ministry, or have said bitter things about preaching, or have fallen into habits of non-attendance or indifference, you can fall quietly back into kind, good ways again, and let people think that the change is in them, and in any thing and in every thing, except in yourselves, if you do not wish to own that. Begin all your good works and efforts with a fresh heart and a strong hope. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Order of Exercises

AT THE

INSTALLATION OF REV. G. REYNOLDS

OVER THE

FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD,

July 8, 1858.

VOLUNTARY.

I. — ANTHEM.

II. — INTRODUCTORY PRAYER, BY REV. J. F. W. WARE.

III. — SELECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE, BY REV. J. F. W. WARE.

IV. — HYMN.

We bid thee welcome in the name
Of Jesus, our exalted Head.
Come as a servant; so he came:
And we receive thee in his stead.

Come as an angel, hence to guide
A band of pilgrims on their way,
That, safely walking at thy side,
We never fail, nor faint, nor stray.

Come as a teacher sent from God,
Charged his whole counsel to declare;
Lift o'er our ranks the prophet's rod
While we uphold thy hands with prayer.

Come as a messenger of peace,
Filled with the Spirit, fired with love;
Live to behold our large increase,
And die to meet us all above.

V. — SERMON, BY REV. CHANDLER ROBBINS, D.D.

VI.—PRAYER OF INSTALLATION, BY REV. S. K. LOTHROP, D.D.

VII. — CHARGE, BY REV. E. S. GANNETT, D.D.

VIII. — RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, BY REV. THOS. HILL.

IX. — HYMN.

O Thou ! who on thy chosen Son
Didst send thy spirit like a dove
To mark the long-expected one,
And seal the messenger of love ; —

And, when the heralds of his name
Went forth his glorious truth to spread,
Didst send it down in tongues of flame
To hallow each devoted head : —

So, Lord, thy servant now inspire
With holy unction from above :
Give him the tongue of living fire ;
Give him the temper of the dove.

Lord, hear thy suppliant church to-day ;
Accept our work, our souls possess :
'Tis ours to labor, watch, and pray ;
Be thine to cheer, sustain, and bless.

X. — ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE, BY REV. GEO. E. ELLIS, D.D.

XI. — CONCLUDING PRAYER, BY REV. S. H. SMITH.

XII. — DOXOLOGY.

From all that dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise ;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
Through every land, by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord ;
Eternal truth attends thy word :
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

XIII. — BENEDICTION.